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LINGUISTIC STRATEGIES OF REPRESENTING POLITICAL EVENTS IN BRITISH MEDIA: AN ANALYSIS OF LEXICAL AND STYLISTIC FEATURES

МОВНІ СТРАТЕГІЇ ВІДОБРАЖЕННЯ ПОЛІТИЧНИХ ПОДІЙ У БРИТАНСЬКИХ ЗМІ: АНАЛІЗ ЛЕКСИЧНИХ ТА СТИЛІСТИЧНИХ ОСОБЛИВОСТЕЙ

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The article reveals the results of an investigation carried out to identify stylistic devices and expressive means in the representation of current political events in the British media. Contemporary media is a powerful tool for sharing and expressing opinions on socio-political events, analyzing the language and providing authentic material for fostering media literacy and critical thinking in educational contexts. The ability to understand and evaluate such texts also offers EFL learners an opportunity to develop language skills for specific purposes in fields such as law, politics, and international relations.

From the perspective of media linguistics, the language of news not only informs audiences but also constructs particular interpretations of reality. Analysis of lexical and grammatical choices, metaphorical expressions and other language strategies allows researchers to understand how media texts potentially influence public perception, reinforce ideologies, condemn or support opinions and shape political discourse. This approach to study stands at the intersection of linguistics, stylistics, journalism, and communication studies, emphasizing a vast role of language in all spheres of human activity. The presented investigation focused on analysis of recent news articles covering various political events across the world, with special attention to their lexical and stylistic context. The results demonstrated how British media employs a variety of language strategies, including evaluative adjectives, metaphors, euphemisms, and other expressive devices, to convey meaning, emphasize particular aspects of political events. Additionally, the usage of direct quotations, striking headlines, rhetorical questions is common, highlighting attempts to engage readers. These findings contribute to a vast corpus of similar research additionally stressing how specific linguistic choices can shape ideological perspectives and highlight the importance of critical engagement with media context. The prospects of further research include a comparative analysis of linguistic and stylistic strategies in British and Ukrainian media to identify national peculiarities in representing political events and shaping public opinion.

Key words: publicist discourse, media linguistics, linguistic strategies, stylistic devices, evaluative language.

У статті презентуються результати дослідження, проведено з метою виявлення стилістичних засобів та експресивних прийомів у представленні актуальних політичних подій у британських ЗМІ. Сучасні медіа є потужним інструментом для поширення та висловлення думок щодо соціально-політичних епізодів, аналізу мови та надання автентичного матеріалу для розвитку медіаграмотності та критичного мислення. Здатність розуміти та оцінювати такі тексти надає можливість розвивати мовні навички на заняттях з іноземної мови для спеціальних цілей у таких сферах, як право, політика та міжнародні відносини.

З точки зору медіалінгвістики, мова новин не лише інформує аудиторію, але й надає певні інтерпретації реальності. Аналіз лексичних та граматичних формулувань, метафоричних висловів та інших мовних стратегій дозволяє зрозуміти, як медійні тексти потенційно впливають на їх сприйняття громадськістю, закріплюють ідеології, сприяють чи засуджують певні думки та формують політичний дискурс. Такий підхід до вивчення перебуває на перетині лінгвістики, стилістики, журналістики та комунікаційних досліджень, підкреслюючи величезну роль мови у всіх сферах людської діяльності. Представлене дослідження зосереджувалося на аналізі останніх новинних матеріалів, що охоплюють різні політичні події у світі, з особливою увагою до їхнього лексичного та стилістичного змісту. Результати показали, що британські ЗМІ використовують різноманітні мовні стратегії, включаючи оцінні прикметники, метафори, евфемізми та інші експресивні засоби, щоб передати значення, підкреслити окремі аспекти політичних подій. Крім того, поширене використання прямих цитат, яскравих заголовків, риторичних запитань підкреслює спроби зацікавити читачів. Ці результати додають значного внеску до великого корпусу подібних досліджень, додатково підкреслюючи, як специфічні мовні вибори можуть формувати ідеологічні перспективи та важливість критичного ставлення до медіа-контексту. Перспективи подальших досліджень включають поглиблене вивчення гендерних та національних особливостей у висвітленні новин, а саме – порівняльний аналіз лексико-стилістичних стратегій британських і українських ЗМІ.

Ключові слова: публіцистичний дискурс, медіа лінгвістика, мовні стратегії, стилістичні засоби, оцінна лексика.

Statement of the problem. In contemporary domestic and foreign media framework, publicist style unprecedently stands out in its flexibility and ability to accurately and expressively present and evaluate socio-political events thus shaping public

opinion. Informational function of press intricately connects with the skill to emotionally influence the reader which is demonstrated in usage of vivid stylistic devices such as metaphors, euphemisms, aphoristic expressions, evaluative and expressive vocabulary,

neologisms, and rhetorical techniques that enhance the emotional impact of the text. This style not only responds promptly to changes in socio-political life but also reflects current linguistic trends and tendencies. Such texts represent the specificity of national identity, shaping images and concepts characteristic of a particular cultural environment, and serve as a valuable source for authentic language research. Thus, while a variety of definitions of the term “publicist discourse” exist, this paper will rely on the definition provided by O. Zaluzhna and O. Kholoduk [1, p. 136] “publicistic style is a functional style of language that serves a wide range of social relations (political, economic, cultural, sports-related, etc.) and operates in mass media, including print, audio, and video sources”. Consequently, due to the ever-changing subject matter of the discourse, its study makes it a particularly relevant and valuable object of linguistic and stylistic research, providing insights into both the evolution of language and the ways public opinion is shaped.

Within the interdisciplinary field of media linguistics, which studies how language functions in the media space, the analysis of publicist discourse gains particular relevance especially in the field of philology. It aligns with the principles of Critical Discourse Analysis (hereinafter – CDA), which is an approach to studying language that sees it as part of social life, not only examining how people use language but also how language helps to shape society. With this in mind the research relies on the explanation of CDA presented by Thomas N. Huckin: “...is a relatively new addition to the varieties of text analysis available to the second-language teacher and researcher. It could best be characterized as an approach or attitude toward textual analysis rather than as a step-by-step method...It tries to take into account the most relevant textual and contextual factors, including historical ones, that contribute to the production and interpretation of a given text” [2, p. 78]. In line with this interpretation, the study combines textual and contextual examination of news reports. This approach allows for a comprehensive analysis of how lexical and stylistic features in British media contribute to constructing public understanding of political events.

With this in mind, T. N. Huckin further suggests that CDA analysts abstain from jargon lexis in the conduction of the analysis rather trying to make their craft as clear as possible to broader audiences [2, p. 79]. The researcher additionally points out his approach to CDA, namely: “I try to approach a text in two stages. First, I play the role of a typical reader who is just trying to comprehend the text in an uncritical manner... Second, I then “step back” from the

text and look at it critically. This involves revisiting the text at different levels, raising questions about it, imagining how it could have been constructed differently, mentally comparing it to related texts...” [2, p. 81]. This two-step approach proves useful for analyzing the stylistic and grammatical features of political media discourse, as it enables both linguistic description and critical reflection on meaning construction and context interpretation.

Uncovering implicit messages, biases and other language strategies contributes to a deeper understanding of media discourse and persuasive power of a language as a whole. The ability to evaluate messages and critically assess the meanings is an invaluable tool for an individual in navigating contemporary events. Therefore, the topicality of the research lies in its integration of linguistics, media studies, critical and language analysis.

Analysis of recent research and publications. In recent years, much attention has been paid to the investigation of media discourse from various perspectives, including comparative analysis of English and Ukrainian publicist discourse, the peculiarities of newspaper headlines, the usage of slang and neologisms as well as the employment of certain grammar structures to convey an unbiased and objective point of view.

A considerable amount of literature has been published on the aspects of using metaphors in modern English-language journalism, in particular a recent study by L. Voinalovych and V. Khmara into this topic highlighted the pragmatic impact of metaphors on the audience. The researchers mention their ability to mobilize public opinion, evoke empathy, and change priorities and emphasis in the perception of news content. It is established that the use of metaphorical constructions in journalistic discourse not only facilitates the transfer of information, but also plays a key role in the construction of political, economic and social narratives [3, p. 196].

An extensive study on expressive language usage in contemporary Ukrainian and English media was conducted by I. Zavalniuk, V. Bohatko, O. Pavlyuk and N. Kukhar. The researchers have compared *The Guardian* and “*Ukrainska Pravda*” in terms of news coverage and usage of expressive syntax to achieve communicative and pragmatic goals. The authors have summarized that both media outlets reflect the unique cultural and contextual characteristics of their respective audiences. It has additionally been concluded that *The Guardian* often employs complex syntactic constructions that encourage careful analysis and reflection, whereas “*Ukrainska Pravda*” more frequently utilizes direct and emotionally charged syntactic structures to engage readers [4].

The purpose. While numerous studies have investigated linguistic strategies in media discourse, the purpose of this article is to offer an additional perspective of language phenomena used for the coverage of recent socio-political events in British media. By taking into account previously mentioned strategies and results of prior investigations, this study aims to highlight how these choices convey hidden meaning, evaluation and influence readers' interpretation.

Presentation of the main material. The material for the study includes socio-political articles published in leading British media outlets (The Guardian, The Telegraph, BBC) in 2025. The choice of the articles was determined by the relevance of current political events in the framework of the research, the presence of rich lexical and stylistic features, and their function in eliciting emotional feedback. The British media traditionally stands out as the most influential and reliable. BBC, The Guardian, The Times, The Telegraph, despite maintaining their original ideologies (neutral, conservative, liberal), demonstrate the combination of informational accuracy and contextual appropriateness (for instance adherence to journalistic conventions, legal lexis, international relations terms, where needed) and evaluative assessment conveyed through a range of lexical, grammatical, and stylistic devices.

Taking the specificities of media discourse into account, a series of methods was employed to effectively conduct the research. Namely, descriptive analysis for the explanation of linguistic phenomena, contextual analysis – for determining the meanings and communicative functions of lexical and stylistic devices within the texts, comparative method – for identifying the usage of these and other linguistic strategies across various British media outlets in consideration.

As it has been mentioned, communication in the media often relies on persuasive and emotionally charged language. One of the most powerful tools is a metaphor. Two common sources of metaphor in politics are sport and war, both of which involve physical contests of some sort. Both politicians themselves, and those who report politics, use these metaphors [5, p. 21]. Continuing this line of thought L. Voinalovych and V. Khmara outline that metaphors contribute to the construction of a positive or negative image of political figures and phenomena, setting a certain axiological paradigm in the mass consciousness. Thus, metaphor in modern English-language journalistic discourse is a powerful cognitive and pragmatic tool [3, p. 197]. Such metaphorical structures as "scorched earth approach", "battle for leadership", "a wave of criticism", "in the race

for office", "in pole position", "it's a ripping off the bandage moment", "the countrywide party machinery" evoke tension, demonstrate a turmoil, in particular with a reference to recent socio-political events.

Metonymy, which involves replacing the name of something with something that is connected to it, without being the whole thing itself, is as well one of the most widespread stylistic devices in news reporting [5, p. 26] as it allows journalists to convey ideas concisely and evoke cultural associations effectively. In the light of the recent news one observes "No 10 refuses to say...", "...this was from Buckingham Palace", "Westminster", "Trump orders Pentagon to...", "The "Dutch Trump" won a landslide", "The White House is getting renovated. Can we do the whole country while we're at it?" [6] – the latter example not only uses metonymy but also incorporates irony, highlighting how publicist discourse simultaneously combines institutional authority with subtle critique. However, contemporary media discourse mainly tends to adopt a rather neutral and polite tone in order to maintain objectivity.

Thus, the presence of euphemisms – milder and socially appropriate substitutions – is observed rather widely, especially in terms of reporting controversial contexts. Drawing from the ideas of CDA, such lexical choices are not only about stylistics colorfulness of a text but rather about ideological perception. Euphemisms often conceal power relations and perform mitigating function. The Guardian's recent report on presidential elections in Tanzania used the expression "strengthen her grip on power" instead of more direct terms like "establish/exert control over..." [7] when describing a political strategy of Tanzania's newly elected president. Another example connected to its description is: "Opponents from the two main opposition parties in the east African country **have been disqualified**" [7]. Drawing from the direct context of the report, other candidates have been abducted or persecuted, thus, the verb choice "disqualified" conveys undemocratic nature of the action, in milder terms. While giving account of Gaza-Israel ceasefire, The Guardian reports that "the precarious truce **shows signs of stalling**", using this mitigating formulation instead of directly stating the possible renewal of a conflict [8].

The Telegraph utilizes euphemisms as well with the aim of softening the message. One of the recent articles on Trump's meeting with China's President states "It is an **unconventional approach to diplomacy**, which is often conducted far from the glare of TV cameras that follow Mr. Trump everywhere" [9]. Here, "unconventional approach" is used to soften somewhat "different", "unpredictable" methods of

diplomacy. BBC as well follows this line in a recent reporting of Prince Andrew's case: "...with Andrew losing his **independent lease** and moving to the King's estate in Sandringham. It's not revealed where exactly..." [10]. "Losing independent lease" conveys the fact of being evicted from his residence. Such lexical choices demonstrate media's effort to balance facts with tact, thus proving the previous point of the importance and topicality of maintaining political correctness in reporting.

A frequent use of rhetorical questions is observed, especially in headlines provided by The Guardian – "Elon Musk, the Anti-Defamation League and the right: what's behind the latest blow-up?" [11] and BBC "Is this finally rock bottom for Mr Andrew Mountbatten Windsor?" [10]. BBC as well employs rhetorical questions in the article itself: "Do we need more transparency around royal property and finance? How many houses do they have up their sleeve in Windsor? And what fresh scandals about Andrew could still emerge?" [10] to highlight a possible development and emergence of new material regarding the said case.

These questions are not meant to be answered but rather they engage the reader, drawing attention to shocking and sensational content. In this way, headlines serve both informative and evaluative purpose. The latter, is often achieved through the usage of certain lexis in the article. Building on the effect of rhetorical questions, the evaluative word-choice used throughout articles further shapes the reader's perception and emotional response. While questions draw attention and summarize the issue, a number of epithets in the report provides explicit or implicit judgment.

With the help of evaluative lexis, an author can get closer to a recipient, transcend barriers of communication, and appeal to him/them. The evaluation function is performed by the adjectives that appeal to emotional and intellectual feelings (sensor evaluation), adjectives and their synonyms (absolute evaluation), and adjectives that describe a human's practical activity (rational evaluation) [12, p. 63]

In a recent reporting of Prince Andrew's case, one of the most shocking in the history of the British Crown, authors use a set of evaluative words with a condemning tone to frame the scandal. The Guardian describes the timeline of the wrongdoing with "... strenuously denied allegations", "dominated head-

lines", "Parliament is under mounting pressure" – words containing a rather negative connotation. The Telegraph adopts a more metaphorical approach to the description calling a recent withdrawal of Prince's titles as "**humiliation** for the history books" and the action with its consequence respectively "... took some time to finally **push the nuclear button** – but Prince Andrew is no more" – implying that the action itself would bring shocking and devastating outcomes and "the name of the Duke of York **will be scrubbed out** of existence" which aggravates the seriousness of the offense [13].

Speaking of grammatical features, it is necessary to note that texts of newspaper articles have such characteristics as a logical and coherent link between sentences, schematic organization, and general thematic structure. The main requirements are literacy in sentence-building, competence in syntax, grammar, punctuation [12, p. 64]. The frequent use of direct quotations, illustrative content, references to previous reporting contribute to the overall coherence and credibility of the material. In addition, grammatical choices also influence the perception of the media's message. A profound study by Almahameed Y. S., Al Bataineh K. B., Ammari R. M. G. analysed the usage of passive voice in news reports for political purposes. The authors highlight that passive structures serve a number of purposes such as focusing or ignoring parts of the discourse and avoiding assigning responsibility [14, p. 1201]. The combination of abovementioned stylistic, linguistic devices with the appropriate grammar construction ensures that media texts are coherent, credible, appropriate and persuasive, allowing to shape reader's opinion or reinforce pre-existing ones.

Conclusions. The main conclusion that can be drawn is that publicist style, due to its global nature, is strategically constructed with the help of lexical, stylistic, and grammatical devices, which allow journalists to inform, assess, and subtly influence readers' perception. Identifying and analysing these linguistic features can potentially be used in teaching media literacy within an EFL course, since it helps students become more aware of the pragmatic function of language and teaches them to engage with media discourse more consciously. Future studies could fruitfully explore this issue further by focusing on gender and national influence in news reporting.

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